

California Wing Public Affairs Plan



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California Wing Public Affairs Plan
2008-2009

1.) INTRODUCTION

This Public Affairs plan, required to be prepared and updated annually by Civil Air Patrol regulation CAPR 190-1, applies to the California Wing Headquarters. This plan supports the National Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs Plan. This plan was prepared by Capt. Chris Storey, Director of Public Affairs, and approved by Col. Kenneth Parris, Wing Commander.

2.) SITUATION ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND

a. Wing Description and Composition

California Wing consists of a Wing Headquarters, seven Groups, and 67 squadrons (74 total subordinate units). Membership of California Wing consists of 2,064 Senior Members and 1,095 cadet members (3,159 total members as of July 2008). Wing Headquarters is located in Van Nuys, CA, (Southern California) and is responsible for program management in the groups and coordination among all Groups and units of the California Wing.

b. Public Affairs Staff Description

The California Wing Public Affairs staff currently consists of:

- Director
- Deputy Director *
- Editor - *Bear Facts* magazine (formerly *Eagle Call*) *
- Public Affairs Advisor (former Wing Director of Public Affairs)
- Director Recruiting & Retention

* Held by same member

Seventy-eight percent of subordinate units (including Groups) have a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) assigned. For squadrons without an assigned PAO, the Squadron Commander or designee handles Public Affairs matters.

c. Opportunities for Public/Media Exposure

California Wing has participated in several high-profile Emergency Services (ES) missions (i.e., Steve Fossett search, extensive multi-day support of local government and the California State Office of Emergency Services during the 2007 California Wildfires, and several actual missing aircraft searches) that reflected well on the California Wing and its members.

Numerous events conducted throughout the California Wing provide multiple opportunities to create and enhance public awareness and understanding of the Civil Air Patrol through local news media. The following examples of events provide opportunities for positive media exposure.

- **Evaluated SAREX/GTE:** CAWG participates in an alternating year Air Force evaluated Search and Rescue EXercise (SAREX) and Guided Training Exercise (GTE) cycle. The Public Information section (Capt. Chris Storey) for the 2007 Air Force Evaluated SAREX received a grade of EXCELLENT.
- **Wing Conference:** California Wing holds an annual conference each year in September or October. The location rotates throughout the state with different Groups organizing and hosting the wing conference.
- **Cadet Encampment:** California Wing holds an annual cadet encampment in August at the California National Guard Camp San Luis Obispo training facility.
- **Professional Development events:** Squadron Leadership School (SLS), Corporate Learning Course (CLS), Basic Cadet School (BCS), and Airman Training School (ATS) programs are typically conducted yearly in both Northern and Southern California.
- **Air Shows:** There are two to three large (multi-day) air shows and several smaller airport open houses/air shows each year in California. Local units regularly provide support to these events and maintain a Civil Air Patrol recruiting presence during the event.
- **Cadet Orientation Rides (O-Rides):** Powered and non-powered (glider) Cadet Orientation Rides are provided by various squadrons.
- **Group/Unit SAREX's:** Local SAREX's and training events are regularly conducted at Group and unit levels.
- **Other events:** Unit personnel throughout the wing participate in various local community events each year. These events include Wreaths Across America, color guard performances at local city council meetings and civic functions, community parades, and at other local events.

d. Public Affairs Strengths

The California Wing has several public affairs strengths that should continue to be capitalized on during this plan year.

- California Wing publishes a quality printed magazine that highlights the activities and accomplishments of the California Wing and its members.
- Numerous newsworthy activities and events (including cadet milestone awards and Senior Member professional development achievements) occurring throughout the year provide ample opportunity to inform the public (through local news media and community outreach) about Civil Air Patrol.
- Geographic diversity of California Wings 74 Groups and units allows Public Affairs staff at group and unit levels to reach a wide cross section of media in California, thereby increasing public exposure and awareness of Civil Air Patrol.

e. Public Affairs Weaknesses

Several weaknesses exist that impact the overall effectiveness of California Wings Public Affairs program. These weaknesses will be addressed where possible through the objectives and goals described in section 3.

- Public Affairs personnel at Wing Headquarters, Group Headquarters, and at all subordinate units are widely decentralized, making it difficult for Public Affairs staff members to meet and interact in person. Telephone and e-mail are the primary methods of communication between the Wing PAO and subordinate unit PAO's. This complicates the process of mentoring and supporting staff in subordinate units, or providing wing-wide training opportunities.
- The lack of a Public Affairs reporting requirement (eliminated by National HQ PA in 2006) has made it difficult for the Wing PAO to monitor the progress and successes of the Public Affairs programs in the subordinate units. This also makes it difficult to determine what support and assistance is required from Wing to support the subordinate unit PAO's.
- Not all groups or units have an assigned PAO. Currently, 22 percent of subordinate units do not have an assigned PAO. Additionally, not all of the assigned PAO's are regularly engaged and active.
- From June to September of 2007, the Wing was without an assigned PAO after the resignation of the Wing PAO due to increasing outside commitments.

f. Areas of Concern

Strengthening, building, and motivating the Public Affairs staff across all levels (Groups and their subordinate units) to meet the Public Affairs objectives established by National, Regional, and Wing Public Affairs is a primary area of concern for California Wing Public Affairs. The goals of the California Wing Public Affairs program identified in section 3.b. of this plan focus on these areas of concern.

- Increasing the level of participation of subordinate unit PAO's, providing and encouraging additional training and mentoring opportunities, and increasing the progression through the Professional Development specialty track for Public Affairs Officers.
- Improving the Public Affairs section of the California Wing website to include updated news of significant unit and member activities and other relevant public affairs related content.
- Improving communications and flow of information in both directions between Wing and subordinate unit Public Affairs staff.

3.) PUBLIC AFFAIRS OBJECTIVES & GOALS

a. Objectives

The California Wing Public Affairs effort is primarily focused on program management and support. California Wing Public Affairs has identified and established the following five objectives for the 2008 – 2009 plan cycle:

- A. Support the Public Affairs/Marketing Plan, Strategies, and Goals established by Civil Air Patrol National and Regional Headquarters.
- B. Increase public awareness and understanding of Civil Air Patrol, its missions, and the activities of its members in California.
- C. Support subordinate unit PAO's in implementing Public Affairs and Marketing plans established by higher headquarters.
- D. Promote cooperation between, and increase awareness of, Civil Air Patrol and other aviation organizations, local military, business, industry, and civic groups within California.
- E. Provide, encourage, and coordinate increased training opportunities in the Professional Development programs' Public Affairs specialty track, and in the Emergency Services Mission Information Officer specialty rating for subordinate unit PAO's.

b. Goals

California Wing Public Affairs has identified and established six goals for the 2008 – 2009 plan cycle. These six goals are outlined in Appendix A of this plan.

4.) PLAN MAINTENANCE

The California Wing Public Affairs Plan will be reviewed and updated each January. Additional mid-cycle updates or revisions may be made at any point. Annual plan review will consist of a comprehensive review of the Public Affairs program as outlined in this plan. The review will examine successes, failures, areas for improvement, and goals and objectives. Current Public Affairs and Marketing plans developed by Region and National headquarters will be considered during this review.



KENNETH W. PARRIS, Colonel, CAP
Commander, CAWG

Plan Distribution

CAWG Wing Commander
CAWG Staff
CAWG Public Affairs staff
CAWG Group and Unit PAO's
PACR PAO
CAP NHQ/PA
CAP/PA

Record of Plan Review/Updates

Review Date	Section(s) Changed	Date of Wing Commander Approval

Appendix A

California Wing Public Affairs Goals (2008-2009)

GOAL #1 - Publication of a California Wing magazine (*Bear Facts*)

Description: California Wing will continue to publish its thrice-yearly printed magazine, *Bear Facts* (formerly *Eagle Call*). *Bear Facts* will be distributed via U.S. Mail to all California Wing members. Each issue of *Bear Facts* will be posted on the California Wing website.

Reason: *Bear Facts* is the primary formal communication organ highlighting the success stories of the California Wing and its members, providing newsworthy coverage of significant missions and activities, and fostering esprit de corps within the California Wing. Publication of *Bear Facts* magazine is funded entirely by advertising revenue, with the surplus revenue from each issue returned to the California Wing.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: 3 printed issues per year

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: A, B, D

GOAL #2 – Develop and maintain useful Public Affairs content on the California Wing website

Description: A.) Update the NEWS page of the CAWG website with current news releases from subordinate units. B.) Provide updated content (training materials, job aids, etc.) useful to subordinate unit PAO's. Wing PAO will coordinate with Wing Webmaster for Goal #2.

Reason: A.) Current news releases on the Wing webpage will increase awareness and understanding of the Civil Air Patrol and its missions in the local community and internal audiences, and will serve as a historical record of significant California Wing activities and events. B.) Useful public affairs training and reference materials will help overcome an inability to mentor/train subordinate unit PAO's in person due to the geographic diversity of the California Wing.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: Increased content posted over the one-year period covered by this plan. Actual number of news releases posted dependant on number of submissions by subordinate units PAO's. Updated submission and approval procedures (dedicated CAWG News e-mail address) already in place.

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: A, B, C, D

GOAL #3 - Increase Public Affairs staffing at the Group level

Description: The California Wing PAO will work with Group Commanders to identify candidates for this position, and will assist Group staff as needed to prepare selected member(s) to assume the duties of Group PAO.

Reason: One group in California Wing currently does not have an assigned PAO. The Group PAO's are important to the overall success of the California Wing Public Affairs program as they are the primary liaison between local squadrons and Wing Public Affairs staff.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: Recruitment/training of one Group PAO by mid-2008.

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: C, E

GOAL #4 - Identify and appoint a Deputy Director of Public Affairs (North)

Description: Identify and appoint a Deputy Director of Public Affairs (North).

Reason: Due to the geographic diversity of subordinate units, additional Public Affairs staff assistance is necessary to successfully manage Public Affairs initiatives to strengthen the California Wing Public Affairs program.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: Appointment of a Deputy Director of Public Affairs (North) by mid-2008

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: A, E

GOAL #5 - Creation/maintenance of Public Affairs and Crisis Communications Plans

Description: A.) Creation of a Wing Crisis Communications Plan and a Wing Public Affairs Plan. B.) Conduct annual review and update of both plans using input from key Wing command staff to address future needs.

Reason: A.) Civil Air Patrol Regulation 190-1 requires the creation of Public Affairs and Crisis Communications plans to ensure wing support of National Public Affairs and Marketing goals, and the ability to manage the unique public information needs of a crisis with the potential to damage to the reputation/image of the Civil Air Patrol.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: A.) This goal has been met with the creation of both described plans. B.) Annual plan review and updates conducted.

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: A, B, C, D

GOAL# 6 - Insure each Group has a cadre of trained and active Mission Information Officers (MIO)

Description: Ensure each Group has at least one qualified and active Emergency Services MIO.

Reason: In a March 2008 letter to all Wing Commanders, Brig. Gen. Courter addressed the importance of having only qualified spokespersons speaking for Civil Air Patrol during operational missions. The majority of MIO's in the California Wing hold an MIO rating by way of possessing an Incident Commander (IC) rating. A cadre of trained, qualified, and active MIO's will allow the IC to remain focused on overall incident management and command, while professionally representing Civil Air Patrol to the local media.

Evaluation/Measure of Success: By the end of this plan cycle, 50 percent of Groups in California Wing will have at least one qualified and active MIO. MIO's may be from any squadron (or group HQ) within each of California Wings seven groups.

Meets and Supports California Wing Public Affairs Objectives: A, B, C,E